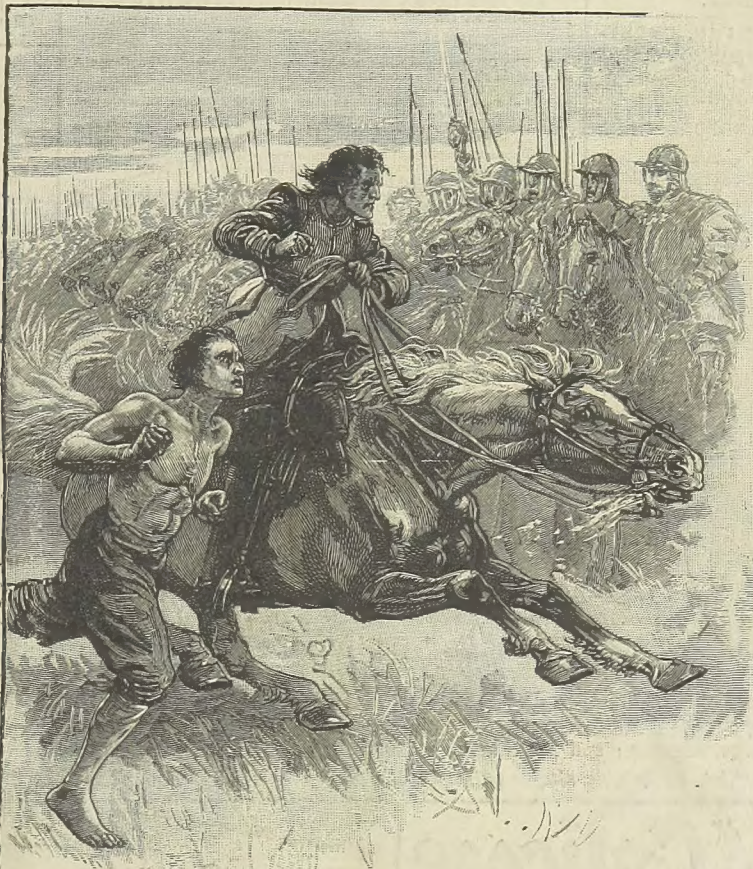


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ILLUSTRATED PENNY TALES.

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No. 7.—CONTAINING :—

LAYING A GHOST *By George Manville Fenn.*

QUIXARVYN'S RIVAL *By H. Greenhough Smith.*

WIFE OR HELPMEET? STUDY OF A WOMAN.

By Jeanne Mairret.

PUBLISHED AT THE OFFICES OF "TIT-BITS."

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No. of District. For this Competition the United Kingdom will be divided into 8 Districts as under:

- 1 IRELAND.
- 2 SCOTLAND.
- 3 MIDDLESEX, KENT, and SURREY.
- 4 NORTHUMBERLAND, DURHAM, and YORKSHIRE.
- 5 CUMBERLAND, WESTMORELAND, LANCASHIRE, and ISLE OF MAN.
- 6 WALES, CHESHIRE, STAFFORDSHIRE, SHROPSHIRE, WORCESTERSHIRE, MONMOUTHSHIRE, and HEREFORDSHIRE.
- 7 NOTTINGHAMSHIRE, DERBYSHIRE, LINCOLNSHIRE, LEICESTERSHIRE, WARWICKSHIRE, RUTLANDSHIRE, NORFOLK, SUFFOLK, CAMBRIDGESHIRE, HUNTINGDONSHIRE, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE, BEDFORDSHIRE, and OXFORDSHIRE.
- 8 ESSEX, HERTFORDSHIRE, BUCKINGHAMSHIRE, BERKSHIRE, SUSSEX, HAMPSHIRE, WILTSHIRE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE, SOMERSETSHIRE, DORSETSHIRE, DEVONSHIRE, CORNWALL, ISLE OF WIGHT, and CHANNEL ISLANDS.

The Prizes will be awarded every month during 1894, in each of the 8 Districts, as under:—

Every month, in each of the 8 districts, the 5 Competitors who send the largest number of Coupons from the district in which they reside, will each receive, at winner's option, a Lady's or Gent's "Premier" Safety Cycle, with Dunlop Pneumatic Tyres, value £20.
The next 20 Competitors will each receive, at winner's option, a Lady's or Gent's "Waltham" Stem-Winding Silver Lever Watch, value £4 4s.
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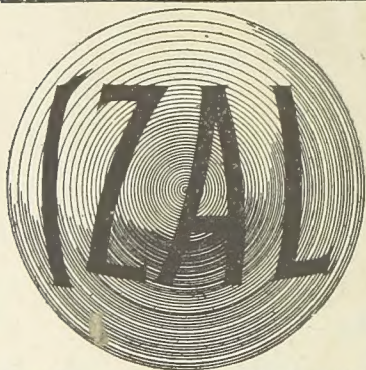
RULES.

- I. The Competitions will Close the last day of each month. Coupons received too late for one month's competition will be put into the next.
- II. Competitors who obtain wrappers from unsold soap in dealer's stock will be disqualified. Employees of Messrs. Lever Brothers, Limited, and their families, are debarred from competing.
- III. A printed list of Winners of Bicycles and Watches, and of Winning Numbers of Coupons for Books in Competitor's District will be forwarded, 21 days after each competition closes, to those competitors who send Halfpenny Stamp for Postage, but in all cases where this is done, "Stamp enclosed" should be written on the form.
- IV. Messrs. Lever Brothers, Limited, will award the prizes fairly to the best of their ability and judgment, but it is understood that all who compete agree to accept the award of Messrs. Lever Brothers, Limited, as final.

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52	10	0	5040	0	0
50	0	0	4800	0	0
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Illustrated Penny Tales.

Laying a Ghost.

By George Manville Fenn.

"IT is of no use for you to talk, Mary," I said, quite angrily; "a professional man has no right to sit still taking his patients' fees without constantly striving after higher knowledge for their benefit."

"Of course not, dear," said my wife, gently—by the way, she always does speak gently—"but you study too much."

"Nonsense!"

"Indeed, dear, but you do. Your forehead is growing full of lines, and your hair is turning quite grey."

"All the better. People do not like young-looking doctors."

"But you do work too hard, dear."

"Absurd! I feel as if I must be a mere idler, Mary; and at a time, too, when it seems as if medicine was quite at a stand. Surgery has made wonderful strides, but the physician is nowhere."

"What nonsense, dear, when everybody says that you are the cleverest doctor for fifty miles round; and at such times I feel as if I could kiss the person who said so."

"'Everybody' is a goose; and, goose or no, don't you let me catch you kissing them. There, be off, little one, and let me get on with my work."

"Work, work, always work," she said, with a pretty pout of the lips which invited what they received, with the result that my happy young wife went out smiling while I sat down to think.



"MY HAPPY YOUNG WIFE WENT OUT SMILING."

I was young and very enthusiastic in those days. Rather vain, too, and disposed to look down upon what I called the "old fogies of the profession." I meant to make great discoveries in medicine for the benefit of suffering humanity, and for my own benefit too, I'm afraid. Consequently—I confess it—I was a dangerous kind of doctor, and always itching to try experiments.

At the time of which I am speaking, I was mad upon a new remedy which I believed I had discovered for the

nervous state consequent upon the failure of the digestive powers in people of middle age; and it was upon this remedy that I now sat down to think in my little consulting-room and dispensary combined.

I had been pondering over the subject then for months, and the more I thought the more convinced I was that my remedy would work wonders, but for want of test cases I was completely in the dark. I had got so far, though, that I had given myself full confidence in the correctness of my deductions; all I wanted was trial—experiment on the vile body of man, so as to make sure.

"How to proceed?" I said to myself, as I sat amongst my bottles and drugs, tapping the table with my fingernails—"how to proceed? I must try it upon a patient, but it is not fair or just to try experiments upon one who confides in you. Suppose my ideas are wrong—suppose it is a fallacy?"

These thoughts troubled me so that I grew feverish, and my head burned.

Jumping up from my chair, I took a clean tumbler from a shelf, half filled it from a seltzogene which stood on the table, tossed off the sparkling water, put back the tumbler and resumed my seat, feeling decidedly better and clearer.

"How to proceed?" I said again. "I cannot, I must not, try it upon a patient. It would not be just. Upon whom, then? Mary!"

"Perish the thought!" I cried, dramatically. "To deceive her would be ten times worse."

"But I might tell her first. She would take it—bless her!—if I told her."

"No—no—no—no!" I cried; and then, half aloud, "If the experiment must be tried, and you have so much faith in it, try it upon yourself, like a man!"

I sprang up once more with all kinds of unpleasant notions beginning to haunt me. Suppose the dose failed—suppose it proved fatal—suppose I were suddenly called away without having time to explain to a brother medical man what I had taken.

"Why, they would bring it in suicide, and my wife would be a widow," I exclaimed, with a chill of horror seeming to make my blood run sluggishly through my veins.

But this was momentary. I recovered my strength of mind directly, and, unlocking my desk, I took out a bottle containing a white powder, which I shook and held up to the light.

"I'll try one drachm first," I said. "Too much? No: it would be absurd to trifle with it. How can I get a

satisfactory result if I do not proceed boldly with my test? Am I going to play the coward after all?"

I went to the shelf where the bottles stood, and took down the one labelled "Sp. Vin.," having determined to combine a stimulant with the drug, which would, I knew, from former experience, dissolve in spirit; but, to my chagrin, the bottle was completely empty.

"Brandy will do," I said to myself; and, after replacing the bottle, I went out and into the dining-room



to fetch one of the three from the spirit stand, but found that its contents were confined to about a wineglassful. "That would be enough," I thought, and going back into my consulting-room, I set the little decanter down, removed the stopper, and my hand trembled a little as I poured in the white powder, a mere pinch, but full of potency.

"You are a coward," I said to myself, contemptuously. "You would have given that to a patient without a qualm, but you are all on the shiver because you are going to take it yourself."

And myself seemed to answer, as if I then led a dual existence.

"I am no coward," it said, half aloud. "For the benefit of medical science I am going to take that drug as soon as it is dissolved; and if it destroys my life, I have died in a great cause as bravely as any soldier who ever faced the deadly breach."

As I spoke I replaced the stopper, crumpled up the paper, and threw it in the waste-basket. I then shook up the brandy, which looked turbid at first, but rapidly began to clear as I set it down, took paper and pen, and was about to write a few lines to my wife telling her

"Be calm," I said, quietly, "and tell me— but before I could get any farther, he burst out:—

"Calm! Who is to be calm, suffering as I do? Man, I am haunted. Do what I will, go where I will, I am haunted."

"As all men are," I said, quietly, "who persist in flying to the bottle."

"No," he cried, fiercely, "not as they are. Do you think I am one of the idiots who see snakes and imps and all kinds of imaginary creatures dancing before their eyes? I am haunted, I tell you, and it is by a man I know well—I must tell you now—I can't keep it back. We were friends out in Australia—years ago."

"Australia, eh?" I cried.

"Yes. Do you know Australia?" he said, wonderingly.

"I passed my boyhood and my early manhood there," I replied, quietly. "I came to England to finish my studies, and settled down. So you are haunted, eh?"

"Haunted! Did I say haunted?" he cried, uneasily.

"Oh, no: a mere fancy," and he laughed unpleasantly.

"Of course," I said. "My dear sir, as a medical man I must be plain with you. I will give you the best

advice, and will help you in any way I can; but the cure for your complaint is in your own hands. Leave all liquors alone, and you will mend fast. Go on as you are now, drinking heavily, and in six months you will be in your grave."

He started violently, and grasped the elbows of the chair as he leaned forward, gazing wildly in my face.

"Drink!" he gasped; "you think I drink—am a drunkard?"

"I know you drink, sir," I replied, quietly. "It is plainly written in your face, and in your trembling hands. I do not say you are a drunkard. Possibly you are never drunk, but you are constantly flying to stimulants, and they are wrecking you hopelessly."

"Don't say hopelessly, doctor," he panted. "I will leave off—I will, indeed, for"—he shuddered—"I dare not die. It is too horrible. But I've been obliged to fly to the brandy to keep myself up. Haunted, night and day, for years now. Can't you give me something—some tonic—to set me right? Can't you cure me—make me strong?"

"Yes, I think I can, sir," I replied, "if you will obey my directions."

"I will, I will," he cried, excitedly. "I won't touch another drop. Now, then, quick; what will you give me?"

"Your chance!" something seemed to whisper to me. "Digestion ruined, nerves shattered, hopeless unless you set him right. The very man for your experiment"

It was a terrible temptation, but I fought against it.

"No," I said to myself, "it would be a cowardly breach of confidence, with an untried medicine; keep to your manly, honest plan."

"Well," he continued, passing his tongue over his dry lips, with the peculiar noise made by a thirsty man, "don't be so long thinking, doctor. I want you to begin. Give me something to make me sleep in peace, without jumping up in the dark, bathed in perspiration, with *him* there. I mean, fancying things, you understand. What will you give me? Ah! there it is again!"

He uttered a wild cry, and started from his seat to creep cowering into a corner as a rushing, tearing noise came down the street, accompanied by cries; and as I ran to the window, a cart drawn by a frightened horse tore by, to be followed a few seconds later by a crash, and then the rattle of hoofs as the horse, evidently freed from the cart, galloped on.

"A bad accident," I said. "Come and see."

It was unprofessional, of course, but for the moment I

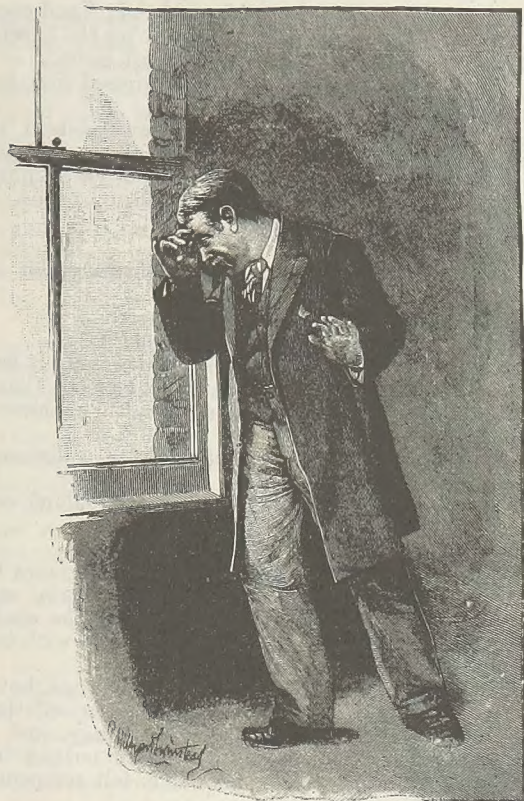


"DRINK! YOU THINK I DRINK?"

what I had done, and why, lest in the case of accident I might be supposed to have committed suicide; but I had only just written down the date when I heard a ring, and directly after there was a tap at the door, and our servant ushered in a patient.

I motioned him to a seat, and in the rapid look which a doctor gives to his visitors, formed my own impressions as to his ailments: the gorged veins of the eyes, the flushed face, the pimpled and reddened nose, telling their own tale—a story confirmed by the trembling of his hands as he removed his gloves.

"Morning, doctor," he said; "I'm very bad. I want you to overhaul me, and see if you can set me right. Can't eat—no appetite—no digestion; I'm a prey to the horrors—my nerves are absolutely shattered, and life has become such a burden that if I don't soon mend I know I shall make an end of myself. I'm afraid I shall," he continued, getting more and more excited in his speech, and gesticulating as I sat back scanning him intently, and seeing in him the very object for my experiment if I cared to administer my remedy. But honour held me back, and I vowed I would resist the temptation, come what might.



"I RAN TO THE WINDOW."

could think of nothing but the poor creatures who had been in the cart, and who were probably now lying almost close to my door, waiting for surgical help.

My wife, looking white as the proverbial sheet, was already in the passage, speechless, and pointing to the door; and directly after I was superintending the removal of four poor fellows suffering from broken bones, cuts, and contusions, and so busy was I for the next hour with a colleague, that I forgot all about my patient in my consulting-room.

"How stupid!" I said, as I went back. "The poor fellow will be gone."

My wife was at the door waiting, and I answered her eager questions by another.

"That gentleman I left, is he still in the consulting-room?"

"Gentleman?" she faltered; "I don't know."

I hurried into the room to find him sitting back in one of the easy-chairs, looking quite calm and contented.

"Ah! doctor," he said; "the accident—anybody much hurt?"

"Yes, poor fellows!—two, badly," I replied. "Really, my dear sir, I owe you a thousand apologies, but in such an emergency—"

"Don't name it, doctor; don't name it," he said, smiling. "I know you'll excuse me not coming to help. My nerves are so shattered that I should have been useless. You saw how it startled me; but I'm a little better now. Will you give me a prescription?"

I looked at him curiously.

"Yes," I said, "you seem calmer now; but there is a

reason for it. Look here, sir, a patient must have no secrets from his medical man. There is a cause, sir, for this apparent calmness," and I fixed his eye. "You wish me to cure you?"

"Yes, yes, doctor," he said, shiftily.

"Then you must keep faith with me," I cried, firmly, "and obey me, or else go to some other medical man."

"No, no, doctor, don't say that," he half-whispered. "I believe in you. I know you are clever. Don't throw me over. I will obey you implicitly."

"Then give me that brandy-flask you have in your pocket."

"No, no, doctor," he cried, "I haven't one—indeed!"

"It is not true, sir. You have partaken of brandy since I left this room."

"Brandy? brandy?" he stammered. "How—how did you know?"

"How did I know, sir?" I cried, angrily. "Do you think a medical man is a child? By the effect it has had upon you; by the odour. Why, good heavens!" I roared, as my eyes lit upon the little decanter I had left upon the table, "you have never been so mad as to drink the contents of that?"

"D—don't be angry with me, doctor," he faltered, as I stood pointing at the decanter. "I was so unhinged—by that accident—I—I was obliged. I—I wanted a glass of water—anything, but I dare not meddle with any of your bottles—'fraud of poisoning myself. But," he continued, with a peculiar little laugh, "I saw the gazogene there, and the brandy. Couldn't be any mistake about them. Capital drop of brandy, doctor, and it did pull me round so well, just as you see."

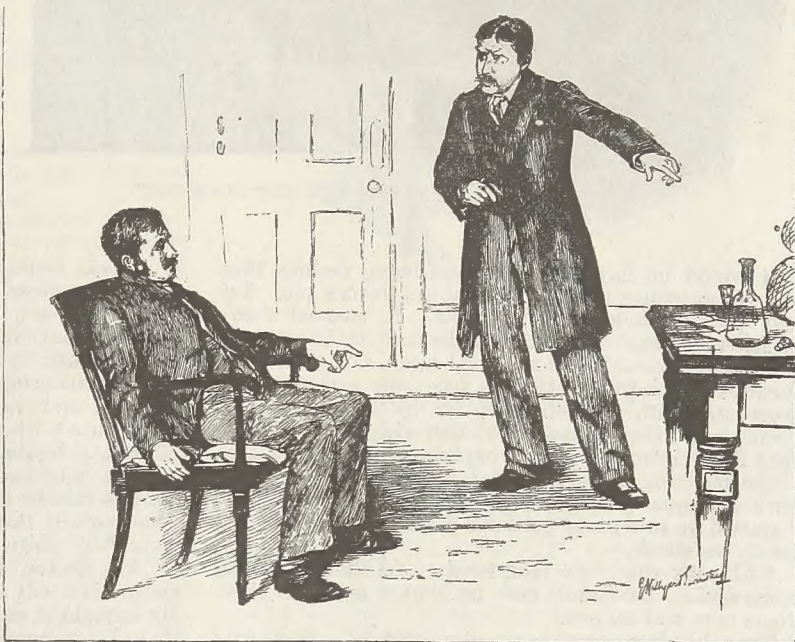
I sank back in a chair, staring at him wildly.

"He has taken it, after all," I thought. "It must be fate."

I could feel a curious sensation as if bells were ringing in my ears, while I sat blankly looking at him now, wondering what the effect of my experiment would be, till he spoke again, apologetically:—

"It was the last drop I'll ever take, doctor."

"The truth, maybe!" I said to myself; and I began to think of inquests, loss of professional reputation, a



"YOU HAVE NEVER BEEN SO MAD AS TO DRINK THE CONTENTS OF THAT?"

dozen troubles of the future which were coined in my busy brain.

What should I do? Give him an antidote at once? Let the drug work its way? Which?

LAYING A GHOST.

I started up, rang the bell, and hurried to the door, ready to open it as soon as I heard steps, and then, with it held ajar, I said, hastily :—

"I am out to everybody, and am not to be interrupted on any pretence until I ring."

Then, closing and bolting the door, I hurried back to my seat.

"What—what's the matter, doctor?" said my patient, with a startled look. "What are you going to do?"

"Study your case, sir," I said, huskily, as I caught hold of his wrist, and then gazed full in his slightly dilated eyes.

"Ah! yes," he said, sinking back drowsily; "do, doctor, do. I'll never touch a drop again, but you'll give me something to take instead. Capital brandy, that. Different to any I get. So soothing."

"Shall I give him something to counteract the effect?" I said to myself again, "or let the potion work?"

I sat thinking over the way in which I had studied, and of how confident I had grown in my remedy, even to having been ready to test it on myself, and I could not help resigning myself to the position.

"It is in the cause of science," I thought, "and I can watch the action in another better than I could in my own person. It is an accident. No: it is fate."

"It is in the cause of science," I muttered; "and even if his wretched life is sacrificed, it may be for the benefit of thousands. I cannot stop now. I must go on."

It was as if my muttered words had roused him, for he suddenly caught my hand in his.

"Don't be hard on me, doctor; I was obliged to drink. I've fought against it till I've been nearly mad. You people talk, but you don't know—you don't know. I'm going to take your stuff now, though; and it will make me right, doctor?"

"Yes."

He looked round wildly, and with a strange air of apprehension.

"Did you ever see a ghost?" he whispered.

"Never," I said, for I was obliged to speak.

"I have—hundreds of times. He haunts me. It has been for years now, till I could bear it no longer. That's why I've come. If a man's in sound health he doesn't see ghosts, eh?"

"No," I said; "they are the offspring of a diseased imagination."

"Yes, diseased imagination, that's it. Shouldn't see him if I was well, eh?"

"No, it is all fancy."

"Yes, doctor, but it's so horribly real. He comes to me, and goes over it all again and again, and as he talks to me the whole scene in the gully comes back, with our fight."

He sank back as if exhausted, but I was soon able to convince myself that he was only sleeping calmly, and a gentle perspiration broke out on his brow, while his hands felt temperate and moist.

That was hopeful, and I felt more confident as I sat there watching him hour after hour, wondering whether success would attend my remedy, and whether this was the laying of the first stone of a new temple of health. Then as the time went on I grew despondent, and ready to rouse him from the lethargy into which he had fallen, and which might after all be only the prelude to a deeper sleep.

I heard steps come and go, and knew that my poor little wife must be full of anxiety about me.

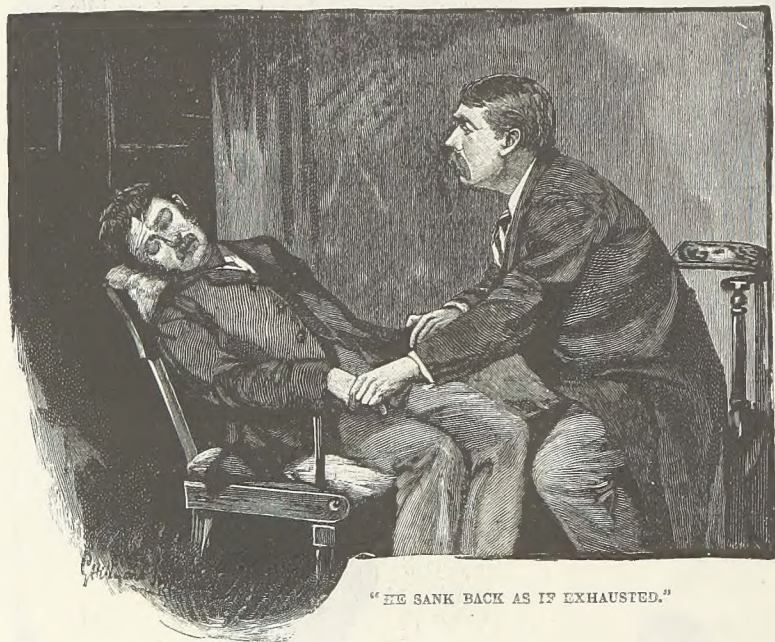
"But what is her anxiety to mine?" I muttered; and I still kept watch, noting every change. Now I was buoyed up by hope, and saw triumph—the pinnacle of the mount toward which I tried to climb; now I was sinking

in despair, feeling that through my carelessness I was slowly watching a man glide toward the dark gate through which he could never return.

It must have been about seven o'clock, and it was fast growing dusk in my room. I was thinking about the man's wanderings and confused talk about being haunted, and trying to piece together his verbal fragments into a whole, when he suddenly opened his eyes again, and began to talk hurriedly, taking up his theme just where he had left off, and as if in utter ignorance of the fact that he had been silent for hours, during which I had passed through a period of agony such as turns men's hair white.

"Yes, doctor," he said, "no secrets from your medical man. You will not betray me; and it was a fair fight. He brought it on, I swear to that. He made me mad so that I hit out—hardly knowing what I did, and it was not until he had half killed me that I threw him, and he went over the edge, down, down with a horrible crash into the gully. I could see him lying there dead. But it was not murder, eh? It was not murder, doctor?"

"Are these wanderings of a diseased imagination?" I



"HE SANK BACK AS IF EXHAUSTED."

It would be impossible to describe my feelings then as I sat watching the wretched object before me. Try and picture them for yourselves. A medical man's position is always painful when he is in doubt as to the result of his remedies in a critical case; but then he is fortified by the feeling that he has done everything in accordance with the precedents set by the wisest of his profession. Then I was face to face with the knowledge that I was trying a desperate experiment, and my patient might be dying before my eyes; in fact, as he sank back with his eyes staring, I felt that he was dying, and I started up to try and get some remedy, but he checked me by his words.

"Ah! it's you!" he said, feebly. "I thought he had come again. He haunts me; he haunts me. All these years now, and no rest."

Then his face grew very calm; and in a fit of wild desperation I determined to let matters take their course.

For what better opportunity could fate have thrown in my way than bringing me into connection with this miserable creature, half demented by *delirium tremens*, and whose life was not worth a twelvemonth's purchase?

asked myself ; and he looked up as sharply as if I had spoken aloud.

"It's all true, doctor," he said. "I threw him down, and he fell, and then I turned and fled, for I knew they would hang me, if I was taken. Doctor," he cried, fiercely, "I wish they had, for I have suffered ten thousand times more agony in these wretched years. Yes : he has always been with me, always. Haunting me day and night, leering at me, and showing me the whole scene again, till I have drunk, and drunk, and drunk to drown it all—gone on drinking till I am the miserable wretch you see. But you'll cure me now, for it was all fancy. People who are dead don't haunt folks, eh?"

"No, sir," I said, as I watched the strange play on the man's countenance, and began trying to connect his words with a half-forgotten story of outrage in Western Australia years before.

"No," he said, excitedly, "and you'll cure me now. It has all been fancy."

"That you killed—murdered a man in Western Australia?"

"Killed, not murdered," he cried, excitedly ; "no, that was no fancy. I mean this constant horror of seeing him night and day."

I forgot my anxiety respecting the action of the drug for some minutes, as I said—my recollection of some such event coming vividly back :—

"You don't mean the outrage in the Blue Gum Gully?"

His jaw dropped, and he stared at me wonderingly.

"What—what do you know about the Blue Gum Gully?" he stammered at last.

"I remember hearing about the case."

"Did—did they find him?" he whispered, with a ghastly look in his face.

"No : I believe he crawled to a shepherd's hut, and the man fetched a doctor from thirty miles away."

"Too late—too late!"

"No : I remember now," I said. "Another surgeon was fetched as well, and they put a silver patch in the man's fractured skull."

"What?" cried my patient. "No ; you are telling me that for reasons of your own."

"I am telling you because it is the truth. I saw the man, and the injured head."

"No, no, not the same," he cried. "Who was he? What was his name?"

"Johnson—Brown—Thomson—Smith," I muttered, and he started a little at the last word.

"Yes. I remember now," I cried. "Robert Dane-smith."

My patient literally leaped at me, and caught me by the breast, with his eyes starting, his lips quivering, and the veins about his temples standing out.

"Tell me again," he panted. "Swear that it is true."

"There is no need," I said. "How could I have known?"

"No," he said, calming down ; "there is no need" ; and his hands dropped to his side. "Great heavens ! And here have I been living this life of torture, hiding away like a criminal, cursed by the horror of the crime, doubly accursed by the drink I have taken to drown my thoughts of being haunted by that man."

"And all imagination."

"Yes, and all imagination. Doctor, I have done my penance. Something must have brought me here to-day. I don't know what ; but I felt that you would cure me."

"More imagination, man," I said.

"No, sir, you are wrong there, for you—have—cured—"

He reeled, and would have fallen had not I guided him on to the sofa, where he lay insensible for a few minutes while I bathed his face, my own agony of mind returning respecting the action of the potent drug.

At last he opened his eyes, and looked wonderingly about him. Then recollection seemed to return, and he caught my hand in his.

"God bless you, doctor !" he cried, and the tears

stood in his eyes. Then, after a pause, during which I watched him keenly, "I'm weak and faint. Give me a glass of something."

"Brandy?" I said, bitterly.

He shuddered.

"Never again," he said, fervently. "You doctors have something else."

I mixed a little stimulating medicine, which he drank with avidity, and then rose.

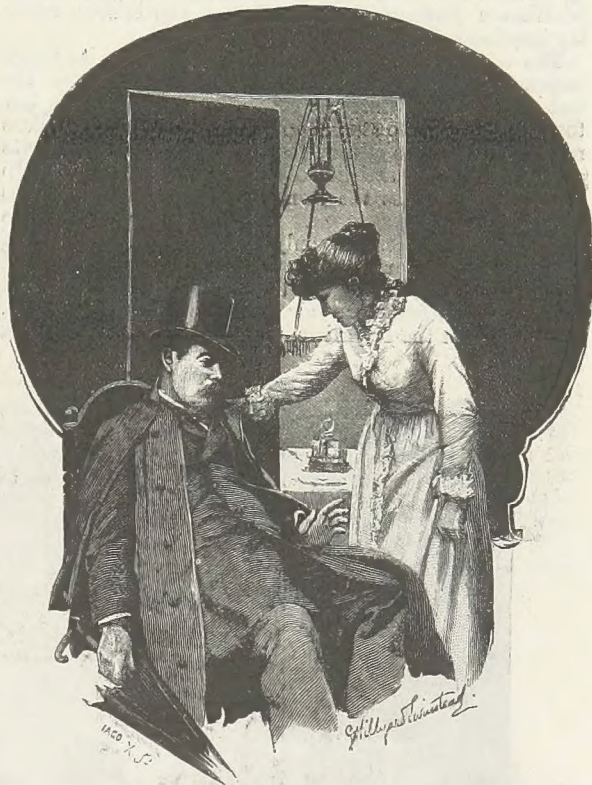
"Thank you, doctor," he said, with a faint smile. "You've laid the ghost. There : I think I'll go."

"No," I said, "be still for an hour or two. I want to watch your case a little longer."

"I am your patient, doctor," he replied, with his whole manner changed ; and he lay there till quite late before he left, shaking my hand warmly, and saying that he would come again.

But I could not rest without seeing him to his lodgings, where I stayed till midnight, and then went home more anxious than I can tell.

"A very serious case, darling," I said to my wife, in



"A VERY SERIOUS CASE, DARLING," I SAID."

answer to her queries. "Don't talk to me ; I am worn out."

But, weary at heart, I could not sleep for thinking of the preparation this man had taken. I was worried and troubled as to the effect it had produced, and, sooth to say, sanguine as I had been over my discovery, I could trace none. Of course, I did not expect to work a cure as by a miracle ; still, I did expect to have discovered some action on the part of the drug.

The next morning I was with him early, and still I could see nothing consequent upon the swallowing of the involuntary draught. But he was better, far better, and he welcomed me with eagerness.

"Doctor," he said, as I was going away, "no disrespect to you, but there's more in mind than in medicine ; you've worked a marvellous cure."

I had ; for in a month he was quite another man. As to my new discovery, I went no farther, and maturer study and greater experience have taught me that I was over-sanguine, and by no means so clever as I thought.



QUIXARVYN'S RIVAL.

By H. Greenhough Smith.

THE battle of Sedgemoor had been fought and lost. Night had come again, and in the old grey church of Weston Zoyland five hundred of the beaten rebels lay imprisoned.

The scene inside the church was awful in its weird impressiveness. It might have been a gorge of the lost souls in the Inferno. The lurid glare of a few torches which were stuck at intervals against the pillars revealed the forms of men sitting and lying on the seats and floor in every attitude of dejection and despair. Up and down the aisles the iron-shod heels of the sentries rang upon the pavement. The greater part of the prisoners were silent, or only moaning with the pain of recent wounds; some were praying; one was raving, mad with terror. And, in truth, he and his companions had good cause for fear, for their conqueror was Feversham, the general of the Royalists, whose only mode of dealing

with a rebel was to hang or shoot him without more ado and who was only waiting for the daybreak to begin the work of slaughter. A few only kept their resolution—among them two who were sitting together in the shadow of the pulpit steps. Both these men had been conspicuous in the fight, and both knew well that they must die at daybreak.

The elder of the two was a man of about thirty-five, with powerful, thick-set frame, and strong and rugged features; a bad man to have against one, one might say. He was by trade a horse-breaker, and a great part of his business was to break in the wild colts of the marsh. His companion was some six or eight years younger. His figure was tall and slight, but finely made, and his face was singularly handsome. He was the swiftest runner in the West of England, perhaps in the whole kingdom. His name was David Dare: that of the elder man was John Quixarvyn. Both were natives of the town of Axbridge, but, until the day before, they had been strangers to each other. Chance had made them comrades in the contest, where they had fought side by side, and where the same troop of Royalists had seized them both.

The two were silent. Quixarvyn had pulled out a short black pipe, had filled and lighted it, and was now smoking tranquilly. His companion had also pulled out something from his breast—but it was not a pipe; it was the portrait of a beautiful young girl. He took a long look at the lovely face—a look which said farewell.

Quixarvyn watched him. In the dim light in which they sat, he could not see the features of the portrait, but he guessed how the case stood.

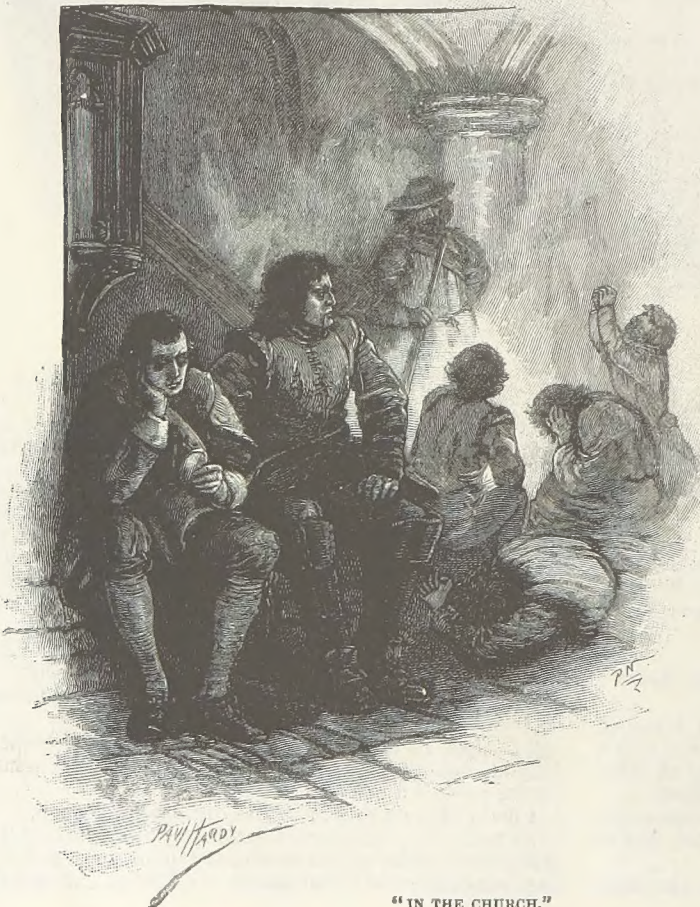
"Poor fellow!" he said, with more tenderness than would have been expected from his looks. Then, after a minute's silence, he went on, as much to himself as to the other, "And yet my case is harder. I was in love—I *am* in love, God help me!—and I also have her portrait in my breast. What would I give if I could look on it as you can look on yours!"

Dare looked at him with interest.

"What!" he said, "have you also the same trouble—a poor girl who will go distracted when she hears of what has happened to you?"

"No," said the other, bitterly, "she will not go distracted; she has had enough of me. And I shall have the pain of dying unrevenged upon the knave who robbed me of her!"

It was strange to see how in a moment



"IN THE CHURCH."

his eyes had grown ablaze with passion. The young man looked at him in astonishment.

"Who was it?" he inquired.

"Who was it?" echoed the other. "Do you think, if I knew that, that I should now have cause to writhe at dying without crying quits with him? No, I do not know him. I only know she loved me—that she cooled towards me—that, when I asked her plainly whether she had found a younger and a better-looking man, she confessed that it was true, and threw herself upon my generosity to set her free from our engagement. I did so—in a frenzy of mad passion. But when I asked her for his name, she would not tell me, fearing, I dare say, that I might twist his neck. I should soon have found him; but then this war broke out, and in my rage I could not keep myself from rushing to the fight, to cool my blood with blows. And so, here I am—going to be shot at daybreak. But I swear to Heaven, if I only had that fellow in my power for one brief minute, I could die contented."

"You are right," said the other; "I should feel the same."

Quixarvyn drew a portrait from his breast, and held it out to his companion.

"Look," he said, "is this a face to jilt a man? though it is one to drive him crazy. Let me look at yours—it is not more innocent than this one, I dare swear."

The young man took the portrait, and at the same time handed him his own. Each looked in silence at the portrait in his hand—in a silence of amazement, of stupefaction. The two portraits represented the same person!

Quixarvyn was the first to break the silence.

"What!" he said, drawing a deep breath and bursting into a low laugh, which was both fierce and glad, "*you*, was it? To think that I have found you, after all! Fate is kinder to me than I fancied."

The other returned his gaze.

"Well," he said, "*it was I*, it appears; though I never knew it, or suspected it. And," he added, simply, "it has been no one's fault."

"No one's fault?"

"No, no one's. Mary Seldon liked you, but she did not love you, and when we met she found out her mistake. You frightened her with your mad humours. Without mentioning your name she told me the whole story. You could not make her happy, and I could; that's the whole case. Do you blame her?"

"No," said Quixarvyn, thrusting the portrait back into his breast, "I don't. But I have sworn to be equal with the man who turned her mind against me—I will never believe he acted by fair means—and I am going to do it. Defend yourself; I give you warning."

Both men sprang to their feet at the same instant, and stood glaring at each other. At that moment there was heard outside the church the rattle of a drum.

Only the rattle of a drum. But the sound struck them motionless as figures turned to stone. Nor was the effect on their companions less remarkable. There was a moment's silence in the church, deep as the silence of the dead; then a movement—a long thrill of horror. That summons meant that day was breaking, and that their hour was come.

The guards set instantly to work to prepare the first batch of prisoners to be led out of the church. Dare and Quixarvyn were among the first seized. With about a dozen others they were marched into the open air. The grey dawn was scarcely giving way to the first streaks of sunrise as they passed out of the churchyard gates; but the whole village was wide awake and in a tumult of excitement; indeed, there had been little sleep that night. Every window was alive with terror-stricken gazers, as the party of doomed men, surrounded by a band of soldiers, were hurried through the narrow streets and out upon the open moor.

At the border of the moor sat an officer on horseback, surrounded by a troop of soldiers. Here the party halted, and the guards saluted. The officer was a man of about forty, whose dandified appearance, which was as trim as that of a toy soldier newly painted, showed oddly in the midst of soldiers stained with battle. This was Lord Feversham—a man in whose nature vanity, callousness, and love of pleasure were about equally combined. His face was gay with pleasant expectation, as the rebels were drawn up before him.

"Good!" he remarked. "These were all ringleaders, were they? Sergeant John, draw up your firing party, and shoot down every man of them."

The order was instantly obeyed. The firing party was drawn up; the prisoners were ranged in line at a few paces distance. At one extremity of the line David Dare and John Quixarvyn found themselves once more side by side.

An officer who sat on horseback at Feversham's right hand observed them.

"I know those two," he said, pointing to them with his finger. "Pity two such fellows should be done for. One of them is the best runner in the country side, and the other the best rider."

"Eh? What?" said Feversham, standing up in his stirrups. "Hold there a moment, Sergeant; I spy a chance of gallant sport. What say you, Major?—a race between these two across the moor, the one on foot, the other mounted. Will you back the runner?"

The Major was a man of some humanity. He reflected for a moment.

"Agreed!" he said. "And to insure that both shall do their best, let the winner have the promise of his life."

Feversham received this proposal with by no means a good grace, for to spare a rebel hurt him to the soul. But the delightful prospect of seeing two men racing for their lives, and of being able, after all, to shoot the loser, at length reconciled him to the scheme. He gave his orders, and the two prisoners were led out of the line.

Out upon the moor, about a quarter of a mile away, stood a solitary tree. This was selected as the starting-point. A double line of troopers was drawn up, stretching from the tree to the spot where the General was stationed, leaving the space between them like a race-course, some yards wide. At the end of the course Feversham and the Major sat opposite each other. Whichever of the two competitors should pass between them first would be rewarded with his life and liberty.

And what were the sensations of the pair while these preparations were in progress?



"BOTH MEN SPRANG TO THEIR FEET."

QUIXARVYN'S RIVAL.

David Dare, standing before the muskets of the firing party, had heard the strange proposal with a sudden thrill of hope, so keen that it was almost like a pain. Then for a moment his heart fell again. He knew his own speed of foot, but he knew also that against a fleet horse urged by a skilful rider spurring for dear life his chance was likely to be small. Still, there was hope again, and he could do his best. More he could not do, though success meant life—and life with Mary Seldon. At the last thought his eyes glistened, and he moved up the course between his guards with the keenness of a hound in leash.

In the meantime a trooper had dismounted, and Quixarvyn, armed with whip and spurs, having taken his place in the saddle, the horse was led by a couple of soldiers to the starting-point. Unlike his rival, Quixarvyn's face showed no elation. For one moment, on hearing the proposal, a gleam had come into his eyes; but now he rode with down-bent head, as if lost in thought. A sentence seemed to be constantly running in his head—the sentence used by Dare in their quarrel in the church: "You could not make her happy, and I could." He muttered the words over twenty times. It was not until the tree was reached, and the horse was halted with his head towards the spot where Feversham, discernible far off between the lines, sat waiting, that he started, roused himself, and looked about him.

David Dare was standing on his right, stripped to the waist and without his shoes, ready for the starter's signal. Quixarvyn's guards dropped the horse's bridle; and Sergeant John, who stood between the two competitors, drew a pistol from his belt, to give the signal.

The excitement at that moment was intense. Not a sound was heard in the still morning air; but all down the double line were faces fixed intently on the two competitors. Feversham and the Major, with glasses at their eyes, sat motionless as statues. Even the condemned men, forgetful of their own approaching doom, stretched their necks to catch a glimpse of the strange contest on which depended life and death for two of their companions. The Sergeant raised his pistol. The report rang out.

At the same instant horse and man shot out together from the mark. At first the runner, practised in flying from the start, and having less momentum than the horse, drew out in front. In a few seconds he was some twenty yards ahead. Then the gap between them ceased to widen; then it was seen to be decreasing; the horse was gaining—slowly at first, but gaining surely, stride by stride. When half the course was covered the horse had drawn up level—and then came such a race as had never yet been seen. For a hundred yards and more the two ran locked together, side by side, the runner almost flying over the crisp turf, the horse stretched out in a fierce gallop, with the rider standing in the stirrups. And now the goal was only fifty yards away; but the gazers drew a deep breath as they saw that now the horse was gaining—was drawing out in front. For one instant it seemed that all was over, the next, to their amazement, they were conscious that the horse was failing. Then they saw a gallant sight; they saw the runner nerve himself for a last effort, and, close upon the goal, dash past the horse and past the judges, and fall headlong upon the turf.

At that scene, in spite of discipline, a frantic cheer broke forth along the line. Even Feversham himself smiled

grimly, as one who, though he had just lost a bet, had gained its full equivalent in pleasurable excitement.

The winner, who had fallen panting and exhausted, was raised into a sitting posture by two troopers, one of whom poured a draught of brandy down his throat. The spirit almost instantly revived him, and in a few seconds he was able, though still weak and dizzy, to stand upon his feet and look about him. A few paces off, his beaten rival stood beside his horse. Dare looked at him, and their eyes met. Quixarvyn's face bore an almost imperceptible smile; but it was not this, but something in his look which the other could not have defined, which struck him backwards like a shock. He staggered back a pace or two, bewildered by the light which broke upon his mind. Then he stepped up to his rival's side, and the guards, who saw no cause to interfere, falling back a little, he put his mouth close to Quixarvyn's ear.

"You pulled that horse?" he said.

Quixarvyn looked at him, but answered not a word.

"You let me win," the other went on, his voice breaking. "For *her* sake you did it."

Quixarvyn drove his nails into his palms; he had acted, he was acting, not without a bitter cost.

"Make her happy," he said, briefly.

As he spoke he turned away, and strode swiftly to his old position at the head of the line of prisoners, before which the firing party was again drawn up.

Dare turned his back upon the scene, and thrust his fingers in his ears. Nevertheless, he could still hear, with horrible distinctness, the Sergeant's loud, clear voice, with an interval between the words:—

"Ready! Present! *Fire!*"

Almost as the word was given came the crash of the report. Moved by an impulse which he could not conquer, he turned round with a shudder. The soldiers were lowering their smoking muskets, and a thick white cloud hung above the line of prisoners stretched upon the ground. At the extremity of the line Quixarvyn lay upon his face, with his right hand clenched upon a portrait which he had taken from his breast, and a bullet through his heart.



"THEY SAW THAT NOW THE HORSE WAS GAINING."

Wife or Helpmeet? Study of a Woman.

By Jeanne Mairêt.

"At last, here are the *sabots* for madame!"

It was quite an event. The lady's-maid had been on the look-out for their arrival for an hour past; even the cook had got interested in them. Madame could scarcely contain her impatience, so when her maid's cry of pleasure reached her, she rushed forward. What loves of *sabots*! Ferry, the maker of pretty shoes for pretty feet, had surpassed himself. They were good enough imitations of wooden shoes to be mistaken for the real articles, only they were coquettish and light. Tan kid, well-stretched over a dainty shape, turned up at the tips, and delicately arched for the instep, fit for the dainty feet of a Parisian *élégante*.

All the pretty "miller's wife" costume spread out on the bed would have been a total failure without the *sabots*, and Madame Karl du Boys was determined to have the prettiest costume at the ball. This peasant ball, given by Madame Demol, the fashionable portrait painter—a charming woman, beloved by everybody—was to be the event of the season in the world of fashion. It had been talked of for a month past. The studio of the fair artist was to be decorated in a manner to suggest country life: the supper-tables groaning under a load of viands whose forms at least would have rendered them appetizing to a company of peasants. That is to say, the ices were to be shaped like carrots and turnips, and the most exquisite dainties were to be disguised under rustic exteriors. The conversation of the guests was likewise to be borrowed from rural districts. All the refined circle, tired of the usual drawing-room correctness, promised itself enjoyment in this counterfeit simplicity, just as Marie Antoinette took pleasure in milking her cows.

"If madame would try on all the costume! We cannot tell—perhaps there may be something amiss here or there!"

Madame was not hard to persuade. She looked a dainty miller's wife, out of a comic opera. The bright red petticoat was very short, the woollen apron draped to look like an overskirt, tightly drawn back and gathered into a large puff below the waist; the enormous straw hat was furnished with a miniature wind-mill perched on the crown; a fairy's flour sack slung on the shoulder; and the *sabots*—the pretty little *sabots*! She was greatly amused to see herself thus, and while watching her reflection in the mirror, she thought of her youth, how dull it had been, and pitied it.

Jeanne Reynard was only a Parisian since her marriage, this will explain how it happened that she was now more Parisian than anybody else. Her father, a merchant of Rouen, had given her a hundred thousand francs as dowry, and at twenty-two she had been married to Karl du Boys, whom she had known in her childhood, under the name of Charles Dubois, a poor neighbour.

The poor neighbour had become one of the great men of his country, and it was considered that little Jeanne had been lucky in marrying him. Jeanne was now of the same way of thinking herself. Karl du Boys had made a place apart for himself in literature. Without being a man of genius, he had much talent, of the supple kind which lends itself easily to the popular vein of the moment—novelist, journalist, critic, historian, as the occasion suited. Everything he did was easy, prettily turned, airy, and light and amusing. He seemed to be himself the incarnation of good humour, and at an epoch when most literature was of a sad and depressing character, despairing woe forming the chief

element both in romance and in verse, the good, healthy tone of Karl du Boys' writings brought something like a requisite consolation to the minds of the general public. Success flowed in on him with a rapidity sufficient to turn a head less solidly planted than Karl's, but he was wise in his intelligence; the exaggerated eulogy which would have placed him on a level with writers of real genius he treated with a protesting shrug of the shoulders. He had the rare virtue of modesty.

The marriage had been brought about, like many other marriages, by a train of circumstances rather than through any irresistible attraction between the two interested parties. Mother Dubois had always coveted little Reynard and her hundred thousand francs for her son: the ease, which had come by degrees through this son, had put her at last on a footing of equality with the Reynards; her ambition stopped there. They might talk to her as they liked about her son being able to find a more brilliant match for himself in Paris now that his name was so often in the papers. She shook her head; with a marriage like that she would have nothing to do. She wished, in marrying her son, to give him a wife of her own choosing. She made the first advances; Monsieur Reynard hesitated. The merchant, who had gained his fortune little by little, put small confidence in fame so sudden and wide as this; but when the young man had paid a visit to Rouen, and he had seen him so *fêted* and coveted by other families, he decided to consult his daughter. The young people saw each other after a long period of separation, for Jeanne had been at school, and Karl had rarely visited Rouen. She found him charming; the name which he had recast from the paternal one, and which he had rendered celebrated, did not displease her; besides, she was wearied to death of her dull existence. Her



"SHE LOOKED A DAINY MILLER'S WIFE."

mother was dead ; her two sisters married and far away ; her father, absorbed in his business, took her nowhere into society ; and her greatest pleasure in life was to listen to Madame Dubois singing the praises of her wonderful son.

Karl, when he paid that visit, had no intention of marrying. He was barely thirty, and his bachelor life in Paris in nowise disagreed with his tastes. However, this little neighbour, whom he had dandled on his knee ; this young girl, whom he encountered in the kindly intimacy of his mother's house, set him dreaming of domestic happiness ; he never knew exactly how it happened, but, when he left Rouen, he was engaged to Mademoiselle Reynard, and the wedding day was set. He was too busy to be a very ardent lover : he wrote to Jeanne every week, and received timid little replies, which gave Jeanne an infinitude of trouble—to write to a novelist frightened her. She was greatly astonished to find the letters of this novelist very simple and natural, and as far differing as possible from what she imagined should be the style of a literary man. In point of fact, they knew very little of each other when marriage threw them into each other's arms.

Karl soon became sincerely attached to his young wife : there was no passion in his fondness, however ; he was absorbed in his work. The poetry in his composition was used up in the exciting scenes of his romances ; in real life, the middle-class man, fond of his ease, demanding no more than the comfort and peace of an affection which was kindly, and not too exacting, claimed the upper hand. He was affectionate, attentive, always good humoured—the easiest man in the world to live with. Jeanne never dreamt of any cause for complaint ; she thought herself very happy, and if, now and again, a scarcely acknowledged yearning after something more came over her in her sadder moments, she quickly reproached herself with ingratitude ; she compared her life of dreary dullness, as a young girl, with her life as a woman, and concluded, like her friends at Rouen, that she had been uncommonly lucky.

On her first arrival in Paris, she felt at once that she had a great deal to learn, a great deal more to forget. She was humble and unobtrusive ; the timidity of the young bride from the provinces who felt herself strange in an unknown country excused her silence, while the vivacious intelligence in her eyes precluded the possibility of belief in her dullness. She studied and prepared herself that her husband should never have cause to blush for an awkwardness on her part, nor for an ignorance innocently displayed. Jeanne had feminine tact in a high degree, and an almost morbid fear of ridicule.

By degrees she grew hardy ; without having really any great originality, she had plenty of spirited life and gaiety natural to her. People began to notice and talk about her ; finally, she was *somebody*. With the years, too, the well-being of their house was more and more established, and they were well off. At the commencement of their married life, the Du Boys had been content with a suite of rooms, well furnished, indeed ; but, after all, a suite like anybody else's. Karl was making at the rate of twenty thousand francs a year, and considered himself rich, and at the time when Madame du Boys was disguising her elegant, though, perhaps, rather slender, person (she was lissom and graceful, however) as the miller's wife, for a masked ball, the suite had been exchanged for a delightful little house on the Avenue de Villiers some two years since.

Jeanne, slightly dazzled, enjoyed this prosperity to the full. The six years of her married life had formed her character ; her timidity, which had become useless to her, was cast aside, like the short frocks of her girlhood. This life of movement, this life of worldly pleasure, had, by degrees, become necessary to her. Her husband had never associated her in any way with his work ; he had considered her as a child, ignorant enough, brought up in the narrowing boundary of her father's commercial surroundings, without much regard to intellectual ideas. He

had noted, with pleasure, that she did not lack natural intelligence ; but of the changes which had taken place in her since her marriage he took very slight note, he was so fully taken up with his work. His study was a sacred place, even for his wife. Silence was a necessity to him, as was also complete isolation. He required a wide space to walk up and down in while he gesticulated wildly, in pursuit of a happy inspiration or an apt and neat reply. He had come to have whims as to his methods of working : his paper must be cut in a certain way ; the pens placed always in the same place ; the disorder of his writing-table was to be respected : all this was necessary, and this, the most amiable man in the world, would go into a nasty temper, like a spoiled child, over a stroke too much or too little of a housemaid's feather wand.

Thus, little by little, the lives of these two, who were fond of each other certainly, drifted apart. The worker, more and more absorbed, went his way ; the pleasure-seeker, more and more enthralled, followed her's. Karl was pleased at his wife's success ; he reposed a blind confidence in her, a husband's confidence, which, on the other hand, was entirely justified. He was content to bestow the luxury she appreciated so well ; he smiled with almost paternal indulgence at her costly toilettes, and her perfectly ruinous extravagances. He had no fear for the future : even if a child were born to them—that child, so hoped for at the first, and even yet desired, only less ardently—what of it ? He was still young, and capable of even harder toil yet ! He felt himself full of life and vigour, and faced the future with undaunted brow and smiling lips. The intimacy of their first years was almost at an end ; life willed it so ; but they remained good friends—comrades, rather ; lovers by fits and starts. Never did a sharp word interrupt the harmony of their existence ; they were looked upon as quite a model pair ; nevertheless—

Nevertheless, Jeanne more than half acknowledged to herself that they, unwittingly, insensibly, had taken different roads, and that, year by year, these roads had been gently but surely diverging more widely. Absence was no longer a thing to be dreaded ; they were glad to be together again, but they could do without each other and feel no discomfort ; the occupations which they had created for themselves almost completely filled up their lives. Karl went into society with his wife when he could manage it ; but, oftener, he left her in the hands of an intimate friend, an accomplished woman of the world, who had *formed* the little provincial dame. The theatre took up a good many of his evenings ; when the play promised to be amusing his wife accompanied him, but more often he went alone. She did not see the fun of being bored, merely for the pleasure of being bored in his company ; besides, she had so many engagements, he thought it quite natural, and did not feel hurt.

The little "miller's wife," looking at her own reflection in the glass, while her maid altered a fold of her skirt, thought about all these things, and suddenly she asked herself what the future had in store for her ; seeing far, very far off, not without secret terror, old age, the old age of two people living together, with none of those mutual souvenirs which render old age sweet. She would have liked to rush off to her husband, to show herself to him, make him, perhaps, admire and caress her a little ; she might force him to forget his eternal papers for a minute to say that he thought her pretty, and that he loved her !

But Karl had gone out. He was writing a great novel, on whose success he counted much. For one chapter of this romance he required to describe certain details of machinery in a manufactory, and one of his acquaintances had taken him to a large establishment not far from Paris. Jeanne was annoyed ; she was afraid that he might be detained, and she had set her heart on his accompanying her to this peasant ball. It was already two o'clock in the afternoon. Oh, if he should be detained !

"Make it up out of your head; nobody will know the difference," she had said in the easy jargon which came to her so readily.

Karl had felt somewhat hurt: he prided himself on getting his scenes as "real" as possible: by nature and education he was romantic, but "realism" was now fashionable, and he, also, must veneer his imaginary surroundings with this "realism" so much in vogue. In this frame of mind, then, he had gone away with his friend, and his parting kiss to his wife had been bestowed with the coldness of irritation.

She remembered this; before, she had been too much taken up with her dress to think about it, and now it took all the pleasure out of her self-admiration. Suddenly she heard a noise below, at the hall door.

"There he is!" she thought.

Relieved and joyful, she amused herself with the idea of presenting herself before him in this costume, hoping only that he might have returned alone, and that his friend had not come with him. She did not like the friend.

She sprang out on to the staircase and called him by name. Suddenly she stopped short, silent, holding on by the baluster; her eyes starting from her head; her face pale in an instant; for there, at the entrance of her house, was a mournful group of workmen carrying something which looked like a human body; the hand hanging down was white like death; the head covered with a linen bandage smeared with blood—bright red; and Jeanne comprehended that it was her husband they were bringing home in this way.

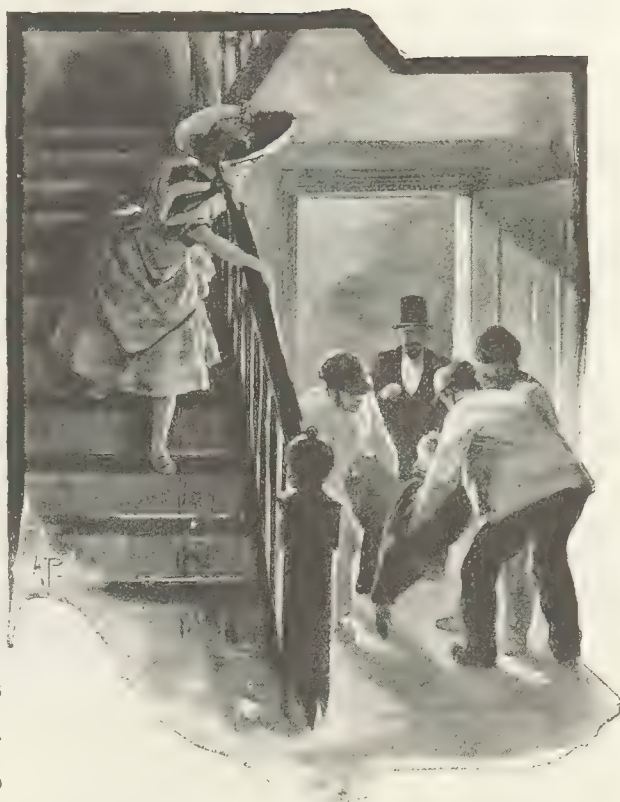
The morning friend was there, and came hurriedly to her, taking her hands.

"A terrible explosion! He is not dead—I swear to you, he is not dead!"

She took everything upon her that was to be done. She felt as though she were giving her orders in some frightful dream. Without a cry, without a tear, she helped to undress her husband. Only once, when the handkerchief which covered his face was removed, she felt on the point of giving way. He was unrecognisable; the flesh was ploughed into furrows, with pieces hanging here and there. He had all the appearance of death, but the heart still beat. Suddenly raising her eyes, she saw herself in a mirror; pale-faced, haggard-eyed, and her carnival dress, on which were bloody spots showing here and there. Shuddering, she ran to her room, and, tearing off her festal rags, returned to the bedside of her husband.

That was a horrible night. She listened to the doctors in consultation, and gathered but one idea from them: all hope was not lost. Karl had awakened from his long faint, and seemed to be suffering frightfully. She fancied she heard him speak her own name, and then, for the first time, the tears came into her eyes—but only for a minute; she had need of all her self-control. A terrible fever had set in, and with it came delirium.

At last, after dreadful days and sleepless nights, they told her that her husband would not die. A momentary relaxation of the contracted muscles of her face was her only sign of joy. The silent concentration she displayed astonished everybody. She seemed to live only to minister to the sick man, like a machine working in some marvellous way. The doctor, who was also a friend of the family, was rather uneasy about this dumb silence in a woman usually so stirring, and lively, and prattling as Jeanne was. One day he sat down beside her; and, while talking gently to her, going into small details of things with a view to interesting her and making her talk a little, he gave her to understand that the coming back to life after such an accident was little short of a miracle. The explosion had been frightful. Three workmen had been killed on the spot, and a dozen others wounded. Several of these latter had since succumbed to their injuries. Karl had sustained no serious fracture, although his whole body had been covered with bruises. It was in the face that he had been worst attacked; it had been terribly scalded by



"CARRYING SOMETHING WHICH LOOKED LIKE A HUMAN BODY."

the steam—the doctor hesitated, and looked at the young wife. She caught that look, full of pity.

"He will be disfigured for life?" She spoke low.

"We cannot tell at present; there will certainly be deep scars; but——"

"But what, then?"

"My poor child, you will need all your courage, all your devotion. The sight is lost—at least, we fear so."

Jeanne, who had been so brave since the first day—she had excited the admiration of the doctors, whom she had done her best, so gallantly, to second in their endeavours, felt all her fine courage desert her in an instant. She rose upright, and scanned the doctor's face for one second to see whether this sentence was without appeal, then fell her full length, unconscious, on the floor.

From this time forth she seemed to undergo a slow revolution. She measured her strength, and thought of the task which was set before her, and trembled to find it insufficient. It would have taken a closer observer than were those friends who approached her most nearly to discover the slightest change in that *petite* Madame du Boys, whose praises were in everybody's mouth. Her devotion was unlimited. The doctors were not sufficiently courageous to tell the sorrowful truth, themselves, to their patient; and the day on which the bandages were finally removed from the poor scarred face, and Karl first realized that he was blind, it was she who bore the brunt of that first terrible explosion of despair, the despair of a man struck down in full career, a man who finds himself dead to all intents and purposes, whilst in the very midst of life.

The dangerous period once past, and the long course of the malady established in all its dull monotony, the visits of the doctor became fewer and farther apart, and Jeanne was left very solitary with her sick husband. Life came slowly back to him; he experienced that languor which is the outcome of extreme weakness; that absorbing somnolence incident to beginning existence all over again. Oftenest an oppressive silence reigned in the darkened room. Jeanne, with idle hands



"FELL UNCONSCIOUS ON THE FLOOR."

in her lap, and wide-open eyes seeing nothing they seemed to be looking at, but sending their gaze far, very far, into that future which frightened her; would remain for hours without once moving. She repeated to herself, without altogether being able to realize it:—

"Blind! and then, what?" And this "what?" showed her such dreadful possibilities, that she shivered with terror. What tormented her was not alone the thought of that frightful night into which a man of thirty-six, full of vigour, who had not yet even arrived at the full fruition of his mental strength, had been suddenly plunged; that startling arrest of activity which had become already proverbial with his colleagues. No doubt, she felt great pity for her husband; but there was mingled with it a sort of angry irritation. If he had listened to her, only for once, if he had but indulged her feminine caprice, all this would never have happened; but this man, who was so amiable in many ways, would never take any advice but his own; and while she pitied him, she pitied herself too, greatly. It was in some degree her husband's fault, if the artificial life she had been leading for the past few years had become necessary to her, and in that artificial life abundant means were an essential factor. Abundance was no longer possible. Several times she went all over their pretty house, quietly, moving like a shadow, as though afraid to break the silence which now reigned throughout it. She felt the soft draperies, looked lovingly at the costly knick-knacks, and a sudden remembrance came to her which froze her blood. Long ago, in her childhood, she remembered once when her father had thought himself ruined, and, all at once, comfort disappeared out of the house. She was very young at the time, but she seemed to see again the troubled face of her mother, worried with the small contrivings of a poverty which would try to conceal itself under a false appearance of well-being. The struggle to make ends meet, the miserable meals, the old dresses made over again, and, above all, the melancholy which brooded in moody silence over the house, broken only by the vexatious murmurings of small cares. The amenities of life often followed on the heels of fortune.

Ruin was now at her door indeed; if not quite ruin, at least privation. Sitting beside her husband's bed, she mused on all these things, and, having a lively imagination, she saw herself in the depths of poverty, alone, abandoned by society and her friends even; for evermore in the close companionship of one sad, unfortunate man, whom fate compelled to idleness, and from whom, little by little, she had become detached, so to speak. She acknowledged this to herself in a whisper. In the early years of their married life she had asked nothing better than to love her husband with all her heart. She brought him her virgin heart, on whose purity no passing maiden's fancy even had ever traced a shadow, and he had not been able to estimate his prize at its full value. He had treated her like a child, a child to be indulged and gratified with toys and sweetmeats, and the gifts had gradually become more precious to her than the affection of the giver.

Karl had been brought up in a world which hardly allows women to enter really into its fold; not from want of affection, but from the conviction that, their education being so different, they are necessarily lacking in point of intellectual contact. From whatever cause, whether a slovenly habit of thought with regard to women, or, perhaps, from a scarcely to be so called contempt, or that monstrously stupid idea that the intellectual man requires a reposeful corresponding inanity on the part of his wife, Karl had never treated Jeanne as a true helpmeet. Jeanne had accepted the place assigned to her, but not without always having indignantly resented it. Drawn irresistibly into the vortex of fashion—and she could find nothing to reproach herself for in having been so drawn; on the contrary, she gloried in it; it was a requisite of her highly-strung,



"SITTING BESIDE HER HUSBAND'S BED, SHE MUDED ON ALL THESE THINGS."

nervous organization—this resentment rarely appeared on the surface. Now that she had all the time to do nothing but think of these things, she thought about them with a vengeance.

She refused to see anybody. Every day a small heap of cards and letters was brought to her, but the heap became smaller every day, naturally. You cannot force a door which remains obstinately shut; but she saw abandonment in the decreasing pile. She was morbidly susceptible to every fancied slight. At the time of the accident the newspapers had been full of eulogies and articles more or less resembling obituary notices of Karl du Boys; now that people were reassured about him, the papers wrote about other subjects. She read them jealously, every day, and when his name no longer appeared, she felt grieved and hurt. It seemed to her as though the silence of the tomb were round them both.

Sometimes a bill or two would crop up in her pile of letters; tradesmen demanding payment. These scented their downfall, then? Among these latter was one of fifty francs for the *sabots*—ah, the *sabots*! That day Jeanne wept.

The weeks dragged slowly by, and at length the sick man was able to get up. Life came back in him: one might almost say that the poor face, in spite of the scars, regained much of its old appearance, only the eyes were dreadful to look upon. Karl remained very depressed, and absorbed in thoughts which might easily be read in his countenance. Knowing that Jeanne was constantly near him, taking care of him, reading to him aloud when he felt well enough to listen, all gentleness and devotion, he would have liked to thank her, but did not know how to set about doing so. With a sick man's sensitiveness, he divined the change in his wife. She did her duty courageously, but still it was her *duty*: devoted and attentive as she was, there was one thing which betrayed her, and that was her voice. You may train your countenance, your words, your gestures to hide the feelings, but the voice rebels against constraint, it takes its subtle inflexions from your inmost thoughts—the sweetest of voices may have cruel cadences, and is cold and blank when the heart remains unresponsive. The blind man, whose hearing was growing extremely sensitive, was bewildered at times, trying not so much to understand the actual meaning of his wife's sentences, as striving to account for the peculiar intonations of her voice.

The financial situation, however, had to be faced. The expenses of the Du Boys' housekeeping amounted to, at least, fifty thousand francs a year. Even by cutting down superfluities—the carriage from the livery stables, the man-servant, and a good many other luxuries which had become useless—Jeanne decided that there was no possible means of keeping on their house in the Avenue de Villiers. Karl was strongly opposed to this change. If he were blind, his brain remained intact. With a secretary to aid him, he could continue his work: not all, indeed—that part of it which demanded contact with active life, life out of doors, was now impossible. Jeanne tried to make him understand that it was exactly those impossible ends of the business which supplied their daily bread, the regular income which paid the monthly bills. His stories, it is true, had been very successful; but success of this kind depended so much on the popular taste of the hour, and in her heart, Jeanne, who judged her husband's powers with a lucidity which frightened herself, had small faith in the enduring qualities of this kind of success. Meantime, the long illness had been expensive; all their small stock of savings had been swallowed up by it.

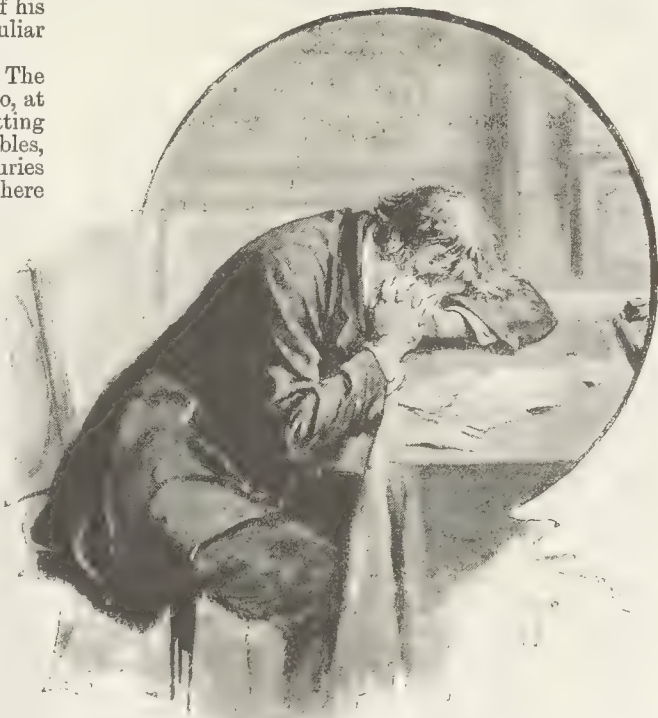
Jeanne took a sort of savage pleasure in despoiling herself of the luxuries which had been hitherto her every-day necessities; her happiness had been bound up in them. She made all the arrangements, decided for both

as to their future mode of living; and Karl, after the first resistance, let her do as she pleased. She found a suite of rooms at a modest rent, and fixed the day of their taking possession.

All these multifarious occupations left her little time to spend with her husband. He, nearly recovered now, consented to see some of his friends, but all the spirit had gone out of him; this man, who had formerly been so light-hearted, stirring, and gay and active, seemed plunged in a sort of painful stupor. One eye was entirely lost, but, contrary to all expectations, the other eye retained a feeble amount of its seeing power. Karl could distinguish the general outline of objects in his immediate vicinity. He could go about by himself from one room to another, but this piece of unlooked-for good fortune did not seem to cheer him much; so long as he found it impossible to write, everything else was a matter of perfect indifference to him.

Often he would remain for hours together, scarcely budging, refusing admittance to everybody, asking only to be left alone in his silent isolation. He was trying to recover his old powers—seeking ideas for a story, striving to depict a scene of his novel, but all his efforts were without result: the stupor had chained his brain as well as his body, and he could find nothing—nothing. The night was round about him, sad and dark, without hope for the morrow, and while he mourned his loss as an author, his heart as a man was frozen by the maddening, gentle coldness of his wife. Their intimate relationship was becoming almost embarrassing: he no longer knew what to say to her. Quite shocked, he asked himself how they had arrived at such a point, but he could find no solution of the mystery. The future frightened him, with the tormenting dread of a nightmare.

Three months after the accident, the Du Boys were installed on the fourth story of a large house on the Quai de la Tournelle. The house was cold and old, with a wide staircase, and vast, high rooms, whose ceilings were upheld by enormous joists. Red tiles replaced the glancing wax floors they were accustomed to; and on the whole, it was not very accommodating, but, at least, there was room for their books, which was



"WITHOUT HOPE FOR THE MORROW"

very essential, and the rent was low, which was even more essential still.

Great catastrophes have their smaller sides. Everyday cares deduct in some measure from heroic misfortune, and prevent the victims from losing themselves altogether in the contemplation of their own troubles; happy for us that it is so. Jeanne, obliged to plan and calculate, to exert herself, indeed, to the utmost, was too tired when she could claim a moment's repose to realize fully all the change that had come into her life; but when all was finished, and their future arranged in all its undoubted monotony; when this wedded pair settled down to an unending companionship, what should have constituted the supreme happiness of this woman became an insupportable torment.

One day their solitude was broken in upon by a friend, the society dame under whose auspices Jeanne had made her *début* in the Parisian world. Her daughter was going to be married, and she was giving a grand party on the occasion of the signing of the contract. She insisted on having Jeanne at this great function. "The poor child was killing herself." She believed in conjugal devotion; but one might have too much of that sort of thing. A pretty benefit she was doing her husband by killing herself, all through taking too much care of him. Karl prayed Jeanne to accept the invitation. "He was very well now, and she required some recreation." She fancied he showed a kind of satisfaction in the thought of passing a whole evening without her company—one word would have held her; but he insisted, and she accepted. Karl thought she was not very difficult to persuade.

Jeanne felt out of place in the midst of this world of society, by which, however, her appearance was hailed with pleasure. She saw more curiosity than good feeling in the attitude of her old friends, who lavished their attentions upon her. Time passes quickly in Paris; there were those there who, not calculating how many months had elapsed since the accident, looked upon her almost in the light of a woman who was neglecting her duty to her sick husband. Several times she was on the point of bursting into tears when someone asked her about him.

She stole away early, tortured by remorse, tormented also by a vague feeling which was gradually becoming more definite to her. Her place was no longer with those who live only for amusement, to whom life is one long carnival. Before her rose her duty, grave, and stern, and menacing, admitting of no dividing interest claiming her.

She glided softly into her husband's chamber with a beating heart; she was ready to greet one word of tenderness with an outburst of pity, near neighbour to love. The heroic sacrifice seemed no longer an impossibility: if she could be sure of Karl's affection, all would yet be well.

The room, dimly lighted by a night-lamp and the dying fire, was all silent. Karl was asleep. She came closer to the bed and gazed at him a long time; then something cruel slid into her thought. He was not really asleep; but was only pretending, so that he might not have to talk to her; the short, laboured breathing was not the regular breathing of natural slumber; the body, also, was too rigidly immovable. She retired noiselessly; but in an instant all the generosity of sacrifice, vowed while her heart was full, died away. She would do her duty, certainly, for she was an honest woman; but it appalled her—she revolted at it. What had she ever done to be singled out for misery in this way?

Karl still intended to continue his work, and every day, whether it was that the painful memories awakened by the interrupted story impressed him still too strongly,



"SHE GAZED AT HIM A LONG TIME."

or whether the torpidity of his faculties had not yet passed away, he always put it off till to-morrow. At length he told his wife that he expected a secretary, who had been recommended by one of his best friends. All that night he could not sleep; nervous excitement made him feverish. He recapitulated the incidents in the chapter to be written, just as a general passes in review those troops in which he has not too much confidence on the eve of a battle.

The secretary, a young professor, who was at Paris for the purpose of attending the public debating classes, arrived at the hour mentioned. He was an intelligent young fellow, but awkward to a degree, without tact, and voluble in expressions of condolence and admiration, mingled in an exasperating manner. Karl du Boys, who was courtesy and politeness personified, tried to keep down his temper; but every movement of this well-meaning auxiliary grated upon the quivering nerves of the excited author, who suffered torture with every ill-chosen word. Everything about him was offensive; his manner of settling himself to write; the scratching of the pen between his fingers; the discreet little cough by which he signified that a sentence was finished; all irritated the unfortunate man, and paralyzed his powers. Nevertheless he persisted, in spite of all this. He could not see the slight lifting of the eyebrows which greeted his embarrassed paragraphs, his absurd tirades; but he could divine, by the momentary hesitations which occurred occasionally, that his secretary judged him, and that he condemned him pitilessly. In his eyes he was an author doomed.

The unhappy man recalled his working hours in the beautiful studio, where he could walk up and down with long strides; where silence was maintained with religious care; the servants banished from that part of the house which was sacred to its master; all prying eyes kept at a distance by his wife's watchfulness—she herself keeping out of the way, for fear of disturbing him. And now, to show up his inmost thoughts in all

their nakedness before this stranger; to display the skeleton of his work, to clothe it painfully under the gaze of those unsympathetic eyes, which he could feel were fixed in astonishment on his own sightless orbs. No, he could never do it!

Yet still he wished to go on. The tick-tack of the clock told the passing time: the sweat stood in beads on his forehead; his nervous fingers clutched the arms of his chair convulsively; slowly and more painfully came the words. This man who had always been so ready a writer—too ready, perhaps—went back on himself, again and again, changing, considering; at length his strength gave way, and he stopped short.

The secretary waited, not daring to break the silence; suffering himself at the sight of that suffering which was becoming agony.

Jeanne, who had entered the room a few minutes before, noiselessly, with her soft, slippered feet, came to the rescue of her husband. She began to talk in quite a natural tone of voice, just as though she had seen nothing or divined nothing of what was going on.

"Enough work for one day, gentlemen; I am not going to miss my daily walk, all because you are so enthusiastic."

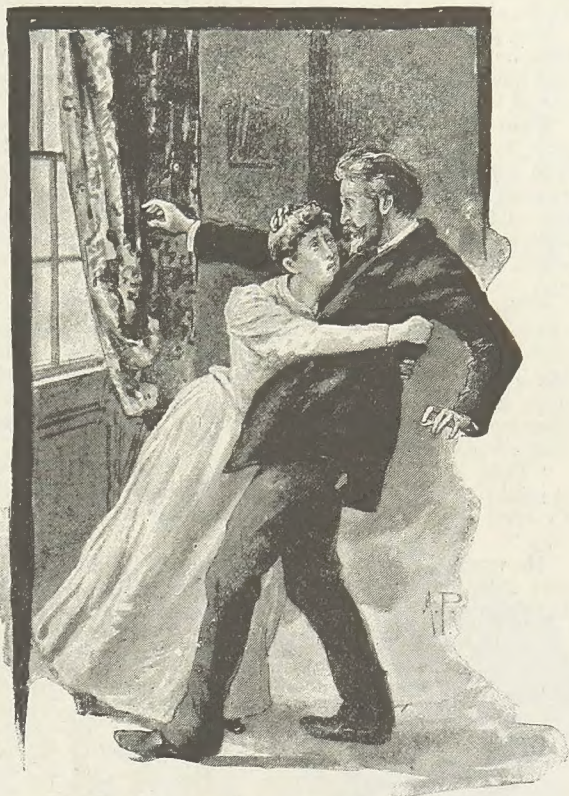
With a motion of her hand she hastened the young professor's departure. She saw him out herself, and stopped a moment to speak with him at the door. The poor fellow thought it his fault, perhaps, that things had gone wrong so deplorably at this first trial, and begged her to tell him what he ought to do, reiterating his excuses. Jeanne, growing impatient, was obliged, almost literally, to put him out, in her anxiety to get back to her invalid.

He never heard her come back. He was frightful to look upon. The unfortunate man at last comprehended that all was now over for him. More than his eyesight had been killed in that terrible explosion; his intellectual powers had been taken, too. This pretty talent of his was pure native of Parisian soil; born of movement; striking fire only on contact with modern society; requiring the stimulus of touch with externals. He felt himself incapable of that patient study of humanity which concentrates itself more as the subject becomes more intricate. It seemed to him that his imagination, formerly so teeming with life and creative power, so full of originality, had become as if frozen powerless. He pictured it to himself, a poor little vessel with pretty white sails, made for winging its way under sunny skies, in the clutches of Polar ice and snow. He knew also that this dumb coldness which was all about him was not alone the result of his blindness; it was the loss of that love which had suddenly slipped away from out his grasp; that forced resignation of Jeanne's; her severe accomplishment of duty. He did not understand it; it had always seemed so natural for him to be beloved by his wife that the possibility of ever being at a loss for the want of it could never have occurred to him. He seemed, vaguely, to realize that he was himself the culprit; he had allowed that delicate gossamer thing of shades and fancies, which we call the love of a woman, to escape away from him. How had this calamity come to pass? His heart failed him too much to try to find out. All that he had ever counted upon seemed going out of his life at once and for ever. One day the happiest and most fortunate of mortals, to whom everything was easy, finding life pleasant; the next, a poor unfortunate, scarcely worth the name of man; now—a ruin of humanity, who was become a painful charge to be supported with exasperating patience. He felt as though he were going mad. The muscles of his scarred face contracted frightfully, his hands seemed searching for something; the dead eyeballs made a supreme effort to see; then he remained for a few moments entirely still, a gentler mood stole over him. Jeanne leant forward to catch the faint murmur which parted his lips. It was "Jeanne, my poor Jeanne!" There was such despair in the words, such love mingled with reproach, that the young wife pressed her handker-

chief to her mouth to stifle a sob. She had followed all his heartrending thoughts on that face which had become an open book to her.

All at once he seemed to take a strong resolve. He rose, and, feeling his way, went to the window. He hesitated, however; his life was nothing but a life accursed—yes, but it still was life. He drew a long inspiration, as though just to feel once more his lungs swelling, and the blood circulating rapidly in his veins; then he laid his hand on the window latch—Jeanne understood.

"You shall not die! You shall not die!"



"YOU SHALL NOT DIE! YOU SHALL NOT DIE!"

She held him close in her arms, trembling; her voice broken with sobs, seeking his lips with hers.

"I am nothing but a heavy burden, too heavy for you, poor child. I should have given you happiness only, and now I have nothing but privation to offer. Without knowing it, perhaps, you resent all this in me. This is why I wished to die."

"You shall not die!" was all she could say, for the sobs which choked her.

"Ah! if you love me truly; but, no; you pity me, that is all; you do not love me."

"I do love you! Do you not feel it, then? What must I do to make you believe? Yes, I know; I fancied I had ceased to love you. You held me aloof in our happy days; it was not your fault—you did not know—and you wished to die, poor fellow! Tell me, dearest, that you love me. Don't you see that the ugly shadow is far away? I saw you just now suffering so much; it broke the ice round my heart, and I love you, I love you! What must I say to make you believe it?"

"Ah! I do not wish to die now!"

He held her clasped in a tight embrace—laughing, crying, beginning sentences with words to end them in kisses. What was all else now to him? Jeanne loved him; his wife was his own again. Out of infinite pity, love had re-risen to give him strength to live anew. And when his wife gently chid him, asking him how it was that during all these terrible months he had never

tried to re-awaken that love which was but slumbering, how it was that she had been reduced to the necessity of asking herself whether he had ever loved her, he replied:—

"I could not—you ought to have known—I needed you so much."

Now that the ice was broken, he opened his heart to her, and told her all that he had suffered; his horror of the life of darkness which lay before him; how the temptation to put an end to it had grown upon him. He had reasoned it all out, only he wished his death to look like an accident, so that the idea of suicide should not trouble his widow. She might mourn him a little while, and soon be consoled.

She, pressing closely against his breast, spoke in her turn, and told him everything, interrupting herself now and then to whisper, "I love you," giving him life again out of her youth and tenderness.

Then they reviewed that morning of anguish; his lost gifts, his frozen and paralyzed talents. He asked her to read the chapter he had dictated with so much trouble. Jeanne collected the sheets and read. Karl listened to the end. He seemed to hear once more the death sentence of his hopes. He took the paper out of his wife's hand, and tore it to fragments, in a sort of rage.

"That mine? No! Listen, this is what I wanted to say"—and then, with feverish rapidity, he sketched the chapter which had fallen so flat and heavy before. He sped it forth with all the inspiration of his former days, and all their fire. These had been the secret of his immense success as a popular writer. He interrupted himself passionately.

"That, all that, I have yet in me. It is not dead, but it might as well be so. However, the blind have learned to write ere this, and I will find a way—I *must* find a way!"

He was quite worn out by all these exciting emotions. His wife, in her capacity of nurse, fearing a return of the fever, ordered rest. He stretched himself on a sofa,

but kept her close by him, like a sick child who must be indulged, and like a child, too, he was soon sleeping that soft, sound sleep which brings repose. When he woke, a scarcely audible but regular, scraping sound struck his quick ear. At first, in a hideous nightmare, he felt himself acting over again the torment of that morning's experience—the secretary writing to his dictation.

"Jeanne!" he called.

She was beside him in an instant, petting him gaily, almost maternally.

"What are you doing there?" he demanded, suspiciously.

"I was writing; there, now!"

"What?"

"Listen."

Jeanne had the rare gift of a marvellous memory. It had often astonished Karl. She had remembered, in the most extraordinary way, the entire passage which her husband had recast an hour ago: the very turns of the phrases, even the small expressions peculiar to him as an author, were all there. He listened, holding his breath.

"Well?" said Jeanne, somewhat intimidated by his silence.

"You have saved me, my darling!" he said. "Twice over I owe my life to you."

From that day forward they worked together. At first, it was very trying, no doubt; there were any quantity of pages torn up and thrown aside. Karl had quite an apprenticeship to serve, and he felt that such an apprenticeship would have been impossible for him, had it been gained under the curious gaze of a stranger. His wife's splendid memory was his best servant, for it was only after repeated trials that he learnt to dictate: his ideas came too quickly for that; the words burst from him, and while she listened, he poured forth his story. What few notes she could snatch without observation were all he would permit, and she wrote it out from memory far away from earshot of her husband. The necessary business of revision found him more tractable; he even took pleasure in polishing up his prose, more than he had ever cared to do before. After a while he got accustomed to this method of working, and succeeded finally in subduing his artistic over-sensitiveness. He was saved. He felt that he had not indeed been mistaken in his own estimate of himself. The terrible inertness, the enforced idleness were no longer his to dread. He shuddered when he recalled the past, saying inwardly that he had surely skirted the border-land of insanity. In quiet moments, he ruminated his work; he prepared his chapter to follow. Living thus in the society of his own fictitious characters, being of necessity obliged to ponder well before his ideas could take permanent shape, he gradually corrected the faults of style which his former ease in writing had entailed. He was thus aware of a slow but beneficial change in the character of his own composition. When, seized with remorse, he asked pardon of his wife for the burden of labour he was forced to lay upon her, or when he expressed some of the astonishment he felt at seeing her, the spoilt darling of society, settling down into a regular home-bird, and none the less gay and lovable for the change, her answer was very simple:—

"I am very happy, and I love you."



"I MUST FIND A WAY."



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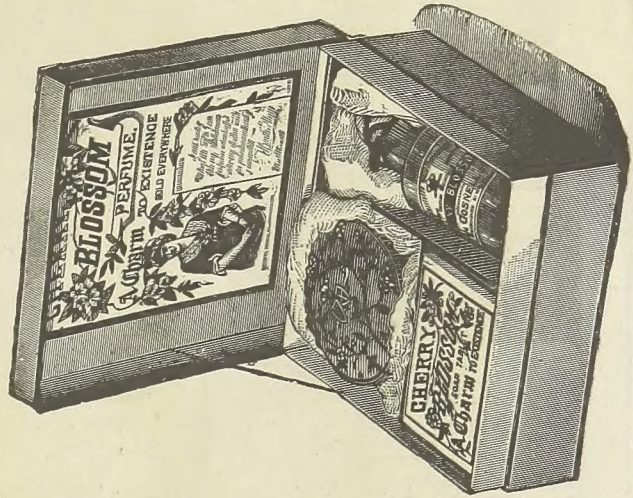
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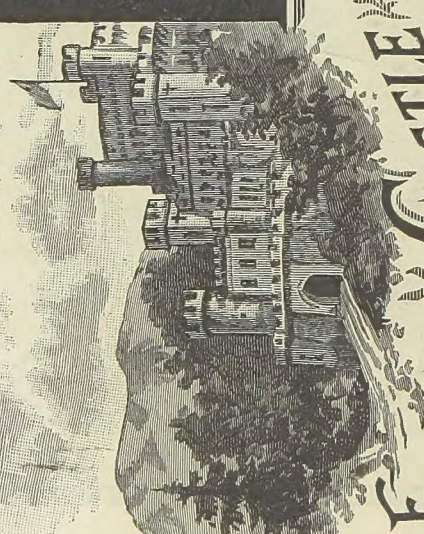
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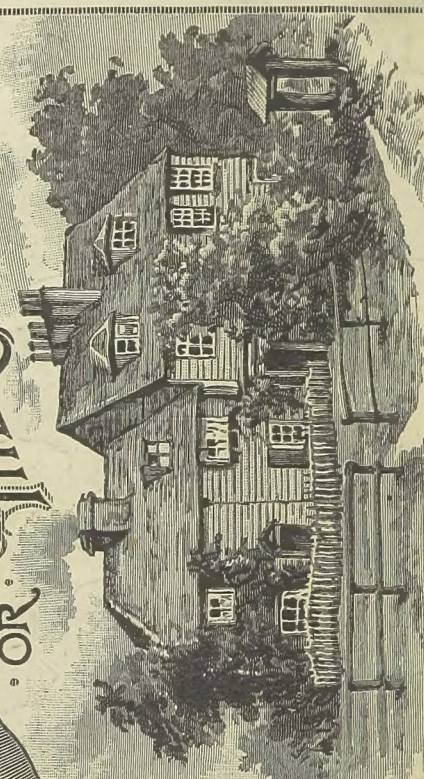
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